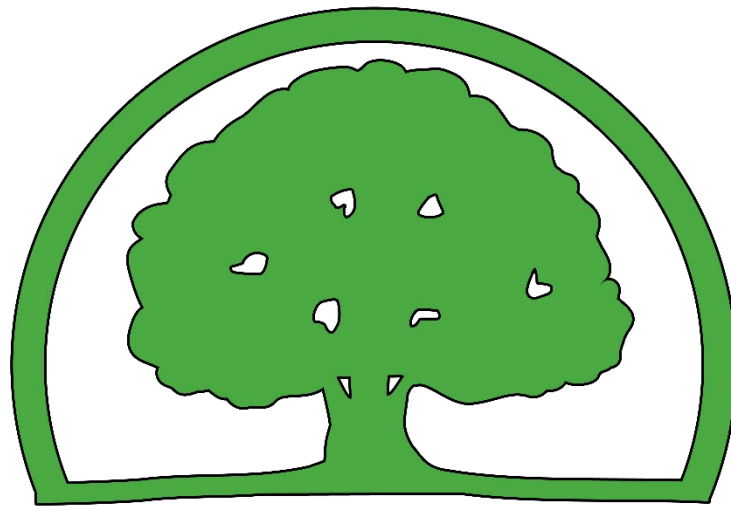


**PITTSBURGH
NEW CHURCH SCHOOL**

Parent Handbook



P I T T S B U R G H

**NEW CHURCH
SCHOOL**

2026-2027

Welcome to the 2026-27 school year at the Pittsburgh New Church School. For more than one hundred years, we have been educating students in the light of the Lord's three-fold Word, preparing them to be useful in this life, and guiding them towards life in heaven.

The student's success is best supported by a positive home-school relationship. Our hope is that this handbook will help us partner together, sharing a common set of policies and procedures. Parents and teachers find it useful to keep a copy to refer back to throughout the year. This document includes changes that reflect this year's circumstances, and further changes may be made to policies as the school responds to changing needs.

It is a humbling honor and a privilege to have your child attend our school. We look forward to participating in your child's growth and to building memories together. Thank you for your support and your trust, which will help make this another wonderful year at the Pittsburgh New Church School.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Glenn

Cynthia F. Glenn
Principal

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1. NEW CHURCH EDUCATION

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15

1.1 Mission and Governance

The Pittsburgh New Church School (PNCS) seeks to provide children with an education based on the teachings of the New Church, to prepare them to become confident, caring, and useful citizens of this world and of the Lord's heavenly kingdom.

The teachings of the New Church are integrated into every aspect of the life of the school through direct and indirect instruction. The Pittsburgh New Church School principal works in close consultation with the pastor, the teachers, and the Board of Trustees. PNCS is sponsored and supported by the members of the [Pittsburgh New Church](#), which is part of a worldwide Christian church called the General Church of the New Jerusalem, or [The New Church](#).

1.2 Core New Church Beliefs

The teachings of the New Church, which are based on the Bible and the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, emphasize personal and progressive spiritual growth, and offer a clear message of hope. Our core beliefs are as follows:

- Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one loving and all-wise God. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Divine Person.
- The Bible is God speaking to us through literal stories, parables, and a deeper spiritual meaning. The Heavenly Doctrines given through Emanuel Swedenborg reveal a spiritual meaning within the Bible that applies universally to people today.
- Love guided by wisdom is the basis of scripture. Jesus said that the two great commandments are to love God and to love other people.
- We do the Lord's will and express our love for Him when we obey the Ten Commandments, shun evils as sins against Him, and show love for our neighbor by performing useful services.
- God gives us spiritual rationality and freedom: the capacity to recognize good and evil and the freedom to choose between them.
- Salvation is progressive and involves an ongoing process of spiritual growth. People of all faith traditions who live a good life can go to heaven.
- Married love between a husband and a wife is a blessing God longs for us to enjoy.
- After the death of the body, people continue the life that they began in this world. Heaven is for all people who become angels by living according to God's commandments.

1.3 Teachings at the Heart of New Church Education

Based on our faith and our mission, PNCS values the following and expects that its

staff and students will respect and apply these values as guiding principles in their work and play. The references below are to passages from the Bible and from various theological works written by Emanuel Swedenborg:

- The Word of God is the foundation for all that we do.
- "You shall have no other gods before My face." (Exodus 20:3)
 - We value the development of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in His providence. (TCR 293, 294, 295)
- "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." (Exodus 20:7)
 - We expect our staff and students to refrain from the misuse of the names of God in idle conversation, extending to swearing or cursing, to keep a respectful environment for all. (TCR 297)
- "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." (Exodus 20:8)
 - We value spiritual practices amongst our staff and students, including observing Sunday as "a day for instruction in Divine matters... [and] meditation about matters of salvation and eternal life." (TCR 301)
- "Honor your father and your mother." (Exodus 20:12)
 - We expect students to show appropriate respect for their parents, and for all of the adults who work alongside their parents to nurture and instruct them, notably their teachers. (TCR 305)
 - We support family life, with all the core relationships that it entails, and value the time that our staff and students spend with their families. (TCR 305)
- "You shall not murder." (Exodus 20:13)
 - We expect our staff and students to refrain from all forms of hatred, bullying, and revenge, showing forth instead love toward the neighbor, respect in human relationships, charity, and friendship. (TCR 309, D. Life 69)
- "You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)
 - We believe genuine married love can only exist between one man and one woman and ask our staff to support and honor the vision of married love presented in the Word. (Matthew 19:4-5, D. Life 75, CL 457, AC 1907)
 - We expect our staff and students to "refrain from obscene acts or indulging in lascivious thought or speech," striving instead for cleanness of thought and action. (TCR 313, D. Life 74, 75, Lev. 18:6-24, AC 4434:10, 6348:2, AE 434:16, 410:11, 235:8, CL 519)
 - We believe that God created human beings to be either male or female, and therefore ask our staff and students to honor the unique and complementary nature of each sex. (Genesis 1:27, CL 33, AE 555:13)
- "You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15)

- We expect our staff and students to value others' property and person, refraining from fraud and deceit (TCR 317)
- We expect our staff and students to refrain from taking credit for things that others have done, exhibiting instead honorable dealings with others. (D. Life 82)
- "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." (Exodus 20:16)
 - We expect our staff and students to refrain from slander or gossip, or willfully making false statements about anyone. (TCR 321; D. Life 87)
 - We encourage honesty, a sense of trust, respect for others, and a desire to communicate effectively. (D. Life 88, TCR 422)
- "You shall not covet..." (Exodus 20:17)
 - We value the call to a better way of living through the process of self-examination and repentance from all forms of self-love and love of the world, which is the spiritual meaning of the ninth and tenth commandments. (TCR 326, 329, 330)
 - We encourage a life in keeping with love to the Lord and love toward the neighbor. (AE 1021:2, 1026:3)

1.4 A Partnership Between Home and School

Although some of our students are children of church members, enrollment in the school is not limited to members. We are open to students of all parents who are affirmative of our distinctive educational approach.

Moral and spiritual education begins in the home, where foundations are laid by the parents. The greatest single influence in the life of a child is affection for his or her parents, and it is through this first-formed affection that the Lord instills a spiritual foundation. Formal education in a school setting provides for a child's further development. This development is most successful when a child's education at home and his or her education at school reinforce one another. Parents are, of course, free to teach their children whatever they believe to be true. But it is our hope that parents will be respectful and supportive of the tenets of New Church education, and will encourage their children to engage thoughtfully with what they learn at PNCS.

1.5 Multisensory Education and Dyslexia Support

The Pittsburgh New Church School (PNCS) has an additional instructional focus on providing dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia support to its student body. The PNCS uses a multisensory educational approach to teach all subjects. PNCS provides literacy instruction based upon the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach and we focus on 5 key areas: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Fluency. More detail on the 5 key areas of literacy can be seen on the following web page: <https://literacyconnects.org/pdfs/The-Big-5-Explanations-of-Reading-Concepts.pdf>.

Our OG literacy instruction is based on a multisensory approach to instruction that covers the strands of Hollis Scarborough's reading rope for skilled reading. See the following: (<https://www.reallygreatreading.com/content/scarboroughs-reading-rope>) which includes:

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding & Encoding
 - alphabetic principles
 - Letter sound correspondences
 - Spelling patterns (language orthography)
- Sight recognition
- Background knowledge
- Vocabulary
- Language structures
 - Syntax, Grammar, Semantics
- Verbal reasoning
- General literacy knowledge

Math instruction is designed with a multi-sensory approach as well. We use a variety of texts and curricula to cover the Pennsylvania State Common Core standards in math. One of our current curricula is JumpMath.

All other subjects are taught with a multisensory approach and are based upon the New Church Curriculum designed and set by the General Church Office of Education located in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. Our classes include lots of hands-on immersive projects; many studies support this as best practice for learning.

1.6 Description of School Seal

In early 1985, as PNCS began planning the celebration of 100 years as a school, the faculty decided to establish a school seal and motto for the first time. The original motto was "Teach Us to Grow", and the symbol chosen for the new school seal was the Tree of Life featured both in Genesis and in Revelation. The seal and the motto have changed a bit over the years, but the Tree of Life has remained.

1.7 School Mascot & Motto

The Pittsburgh New Church School's mascot is a red phoenix (a mythical bird reborn from its own ashes). This mascot was chosen to represent the rebirth many of our students go through when they come to us with learning challenges and often with feelings of failure and defeat. We provide a new start to their learning journey, which includes new hope and renewed strength to let their talents and their light shine forth. The PNCS motto is "Let Your Light Shine!" which is from scripture: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). When we overcome challenges and put forth our best effort to help others and be useful in society, we are letting our light shine forth and giving glory to God in heaven for His many blessings.

2. PARENT/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

2.1 A Cooperative Relationship

The education of a PNCS student is most successful when a mutually supportive relationship exists between home and school. Parents are vital to the New Church education of a child, actively serving as role models for a civil, moral, and spiritual life. The school strives to support families in embodying New Church principles in the home and appreciates the efforts parents make to support the decisions and expectations of their child at school.

need-based aid to all who qualify. The Pittsburgh New Church utilizes TADS www.tads.com as a third party to manage billing and financial aid. Parents are expected to accept and honor the terms and conditions that govern billing as per the agreement. Please contact Samantha Roland, Admissions Director, with any questions regarding billing and/or financial aid. Her email address is: admissions@pittsburghnewchurchschool.org.

2.2 Communication Protocol

PNCS fosters close communication between the school and home to promote a mutually supportive learning environment for your child. We endorse a proactive approach to addressing problems and concerns. Parents should communicate with their child's teacher first about any matters that may affect their child's school life. General information on student progress is provided through regular reports and parent meetings. Teachers communicate with parents if there are concerns about a child's academic performance or behavior, as well as with praise and kudos about personal and academic growth.

For school-related matters, please contact the following people:

Topic	Person	Role
Religion Program	Jared Buss	School Pastor
Music Lessons	Sean Baker/Nicole Myers	Music Lessons Instructors
After School Program	Justine Buss	After School Program Manager
LDA of PA Tutoring	Carrie Gardner	LDA of PA liaison
School Technology	Dan Calvo	Asst. to the Pastor
Busing	Clare Stefanini	School Secretary
Visiting Students	Samantha Roland	Admission Director
Educational Testing	Gabby Uber	Academic Officer
PNCS Volunteering	Cyndi Glenn or Clare Stefanini	Volunteer Coordinators
School Safety/Security	Cyndi Glenn	Principal
Tuition/School Finances	Samantha Roland	Admission Director

Topic	Person	Role
Giving	Ned Uber	Treasurer
Enrollment/Admissions	Samantha Roland	Admission Director
Pittsburgh New Church	Jared Buss	Pastor

2.3 Financial and Tuition Policies

Pittsburgh New Church School (PNCS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating children and preparing them for lives of usefulness in this world and the world to come. While our mission is rooted in service and passion, the school must also maintain financial stability in order to provide a high-quality educational experience. Tuition payments are essential to sustaining our programs, staffing, and resources.

TADS

PNCS utilizes TADS (Tuition Aid Data Services) as a third-party provider to manage tuition billing and financial aid applications.

Tuition Assistance & Financial Aid

Financial assistance is available to families who qualify. To be considered for financial aid, families must submit an application through TADS.

All families who complete the financial aid application process will receive \$5,000 per student in tuition assistance, and may qualify for additional assistance based on demonstrated financial need.

Financial aid applications must be completed annually for each school year in which assistance is requested. Applications are accepted year-round.

Tuition Payment Options

As part of the enrollment process, TADS generates a tuition agreement and payment plan for each family. Families are expected to honor the terms outlined in their agreement.

PNCS offers two payment options:

- **Full Payment:** Families who pay their tuition in full before October 1 will receive a 5% tuition discount.
- **Installment Plan:** Families may choose a 10-month installment plan, with payments processed through TADS from August through May. Payments may be scheduled for the 1st or 10th of each month.

“Save the Seat” Enrollment Fee

A \$500 “Save the Seat” fee is required to secure a student’s enrollment at PNCS.

This fee is non-refundable, and is applied toward the student's total annual tuition balance.

- **New students:** The fee is due when the student is enrolled, and must be paid prior to the student's first day of school.
- **Returning students:** The fee is due by June 30.

Delinquent Tuition

Families are responsible for all late fees and non-sufficient funds (NSF) charges assessed by TADS.

If tuition payments fall behind, the school will work with the family to establish a payment plan. This plan must be developed in consultation with the Admissions Director and approved by the Principal and the board.

Failure to make satisfactory progress toward resolving outstanding tuition balances may result in the following actions:

- Students may not begin a new academic year until prior tuition obligations are resolved.
- School records, including transcripts, diplomas, and other academic records, will not be released until all financial obligations to PNCS have been fulfilled.
- Delinquent accounts may be placed with a collection agency. Accounts referred for collection will incur an additional 30% collection fee.
- Families with unresolved tuition balances may be asked to seek alternative educational arrangements for their children.

Withdrawal Policy

When a student enrolls at PNCS, the school commits staffing, classroom space, and educational resources for that student for the full academic year. Because these commitments are made in advance, withdrawing a student during the school year does not significantly reduce the school's expenses.

For this reason, the following withdrawal policy applies:

Once a student begins attending PNCS, the family is responsible for a minimum tuition payment of \$5,000 per student for the academic year, regardless of the date of withdrawal.

- If the student withdraws **before January 1**, the family remains responsible for a minimum total tuition payment of \$5,000.
- If the student withdraws **after January 1**, the family is responsible for the full annual tuition amount.

Any tuition payments already made will be credited toward these obligations.

Written notice of withdrawal must be submitted to the school office at least one

week prior to the student's final day of attendance.

Contact Information

If you have questions regarding tuition or financial aid, please contact:

Samantha Roland
Admissions Director
412-260-9147
admissions@pittsburghnewchurchschool.org

2.4 Principal's Council

An important means of communication between home and school is the Principal's Council. The council is typically composed of parents, teacher representatives, and the principal. It performs the classic threefold function of a council – an avenue of communication from parents to the school, an avenue of communication from the school to parents, and a forum to discuss issues related to the school. The council conducts monthly meetings with agenda items and methods for follow-through from previous meetings.

The names of the members and their contact information are published in every issue of the school newsletter, *The Chalk Talk*. Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions or suggestions.

2.5 Volunteering

Our school community is strengthened by a strong bond between home and school, most frequently realized through parents and teachers working together. To this end, we require PNCS families to complete at least 16 hours of volunteer service each school year. Hours of volunteer services will be monitored and updates will be sent out with the student report cards. Families that do not complete their 16 hours of volunteer time will be assessed a fee of \$250.

There are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of PNCS through volunteering. One can volunteer to be a class parent, who provides many useful services, such as organizing food for educational festivals, arranging parent chaperons for school trips, etc. If you are interested in placing your name on a list for being a class parent for the coming year, please contact the school secretary. Otherwise, look for communication from your child's classroom teacher or announcements in the school newsletter or e-mails during the school year for ways to help out.

Another way to volunteer at PNCS is to join the Principal's Council. The Principal's Council coordinates regular volunteer projects for parents and community members at PNCS. Typically, volunteer activities range from organizing tasks (photocopying, putting up bulletin boards, etc.) to working directly with students (in the school garden, backstage at a school play or festival, and so on). If you're interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities, contact our secretary, Clare Stefanini, at (412) 731-0122.

3. ATTENDANCE & TRANSPORTATION

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark 10:13-14

3.1 Standard Daily Schedule

The schedule for the normal school day will be as follows:

8:15 am	School opens
8:20 am	All students in their classrooms
8:30 am	Morning worship begins
9:00 am	Academic classes begin
9:45 am	AM snack and recess
10:15 am	Classes resume
12:00 pm	Lunch and recess
12:45 pm	Classes resume
2:35 pm	Duties
3:00 pm	Dismissal

At the completion of the school day students are expected to leave the campus unless they are participating in after school activities.

3.2 Absence

Absence from school gets in the way of student learning, so the state of Pennsylvania has clearly defined expectations about how much time a student is required to be at school. The Pittsburgh New Church School abides by those requirements and has the following plan for supporting families in getting their children to school regularly. The policy below outlines attendance expectations and the plan for what will happen in the case of student absence.

- A maximum of ten days of cumulative excused absences verified by parental notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten cumulative days will require a written excuse from a physician. Doctors' notes can be provided at any time during the year; those provided before a student reaches 10 absences may offset the need for doctors' notes later.
- Unexcused absences are considered unlawful. After each unexcused absence, the school will communicate with the family, and all unexcused absences beyond three will be reported to the school district in which the student resides.

3.3 Excused Absence

An absence is considered excused if it is the result of the following:

- Student illness
- Family emergency

- Death of a family member
- Medical or dental appointments
- Authorized school activities
- Pre-approved educational travel
- Required exclusions and quarantine (assigned and communicated by the school or county health department) resulting from exposure to COVID or other health epidemics (see [Section 3.4](#))

In order for the absence to be considered excused, a parent or guardian of the student must provide a note or email to the school that explains the reason for the absence, and the reason must fit within the guidelines listed above. If not given on the day of absence, parent notification must be produced within three days of the student's return to school following the absence. If no notification is ever produced it will be considered an unexcused absence.

*Note: Students who are absent on a given day are not permitted to attend school-sponsored events during that day or evening. This even applies to students who have a half-day absence for the latter half of the school day, if the absence is not due to medical or dental appointments. Special permission to participate may be granted by the principal.

3.4 Absence for Health Department Exclusion

Students who are excluded from attendance at PNCS because of health department regulations in cases of health epidemics will not accrue absences that apply to the upper limit of ten excused absences. These exclusion absences will be recorded but treated differently, and will not lead to further action.

3.5 Absence for Travel or Vacation

We request that parents plan around the school calendar when scheduling vacations. Children should not be taken out of school for leisure vacation when school is in session. Absences for these vacations will be considered unexcused. PNCS recognizes that a rare opportunity may arise for a family to take a trip with educational value for which an exception may be made, but absences from such trips will apply to students' ten-day excused absence totals.

For an exception to be made, a parent or guardian must submit a Pre-Approved Educational Travel Form at least one week prior to the trip. Forms can be requested through the school office. Contact the school secretary for a form. If a form is not submitted, the absence will be recorded as unexcused.

3.6 Lateness

The PNCS school day officially begins at 8:30 am. Students are expected to be **in their classrooms** by that time. Students who arrive promptly often have the opportunity to get a head start on handing in homework, catching up on unfinished assignments, or getting ahead on long-term assignments. Arriving on time helps students to be ready for a successful school day and contributes to a calm and orderly start to the day. Students arriving after 8:30, consequently, are at a

disadvantage and often miss important information. For these reasons, we have the following guidelines to support students in their timely arrival at school.

3.7 Half Absence

A student is considered late if he or she arrives after 8:30 am. Students arriving after 11:00 are considered absent for half the school day. Likewise, students dismissed before 11:00 are also considered absent for half the day.

3.8 Excused Lateness

Lateness will be excused if it falls into the following categories:

- The student's bus is late
- A major traffic delay (due to an accident, flooding, etc.)
- A medical or dental appointment

3.9 Unexcused Lateness

When a student accrues five or more unexcused latenesses in a term, the parents will receive a call or email from the school. If the pattern continues, the principal will request a meeting with the parents to problem-solve and offer support in getting the student to school on time.

The school will keep records of excused lateness and unexcused lateness. There will be no follow-up action with regard to excused lateness, except in cases where students accrue a significant number (>10) and the student's education is negatively impacted. At such a point, a phone conversation or a meeting with the parents will be initiated by the school to let the parents know that problems are developing and to help problem-solve better solutions (e.g., alternative times for orthodontist appointments, etc.).

Each time a student arrives in his/her classroom after 8:30 am, the email below will be sent home to parents. This note is intended to inform parents that their child arrived late, since parents may not be aware of this fact. Parents can use this information to improve timeliness.

Dear (parent name):

This is an automatically generated letter. The purpose is to communicate that (student name) did not make it into the classroom by the 8:30 am morning bell. We noted their arrival at (time).

Since (date of the beginning of term), (child's name) has been tardy x times on the following dates:

The policy on unexcused lateness is as follows: After the fifth tardy, a conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and the principal will be required.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

*Cynthia Glenn
Principal*

3.10 Communicating Absences

When a student will be missing school, we ask parents to notify the school secretary, and the classroom teacher, preferably by email, with the reasons for the absence, prior to the start of the school day (before 8:30 am). We must account for the whereabouts of all students, so if students do not show up for school then we need to locate them to ensure that they are safe.

3.11 Daily Dismissal

Children must follow their family's daily pick-up plan. Regularly bused students should provide written notification (e-mail) to the school secretary if they will not use the bus service that day. Parents must provide a written notice to their child's teacher and the school secretary whenever deviating from their daily pickup plan. Arrange playdates directly with your child or other parents, not through the school. Please call our school secretary at (412) 731-0122 only when unforeseen circumstances require last-minute changes in plans.

In cases where custody is shared, we require up-to-date information about who is designated to drop off and pick up students, including any relevant legal documents. Custody schedules must be signed by both parents unless a document is issued from a court that prohibits one parent from having access to his/her child. Parents in such situations must submit to the principal a written pick-up plan at the beginning of each school year.

3.12 School Busing

Busing is provided to individual students through their public school district. Questions about busing should be directed to the school secretary or to the family's school district. Most school districts do not allow students to bring friends home with them on the bus, so other arrangements need to be made for transportation for after-school playdates.

3.13 School Closings, Delayed Openings, and Cancellations

Weather or other emergencies might require that school be delayed, canceled, or closed after the school day has begun. Parents should assume PNCS is holding classes even in inclement weather unless notified otherwise. Notification of late openings or school cancellations will be announced through a mass text message system and will also be posted on the PNCS website and Facebook page. We follow the Pittsburgh Public School district for weather-related cancellations and delays.

The decision to cancel or delay school opening for PNCS is largely dependent on whether or not buses are running in school districts where our students live. Other factors such as student illness, power, or heat may influence this decision.

Emergency dismissals are called in extreme conditions. You will be contacted if your child is to be sent home mid-day. PNCS will send a text using Mojo Text asking for dismissal instructions. It is important that you respond to this text and not try to contact the school office with the plans for your children. Note that you might not recognize the number this text comes from, but please do respond to a message asking for instructions for your child's dismissal.

Key points:

- Watch for a text from PNCS. These messages will come from Mojo Text and will start with the words "PNCS Safety"
- Reply to text with dismissal instructions
- Do not phone/email/text the school office
- Keep the phone on and nearby

Important Emergency Dismissal Information:

- Do not call classrooms. If you must call the school, to return a message for instance, please call the secretary at (412) 731-0122.
- Pick-ups may only occur at the School Entrance door. Parents may not enter the school building during an emergency dismissal, because that distracts staff needing to keep track of all students.
- Students might not be released until conditions are determined to be safe.
- Special arrangements (playdates, for example) based on normal dismissal times will not be honored in the case of an emergency dismissal. Students will not be released to neighbors or relatives not listed as emergency contacts or designated in advance without parent approval.

For more information about these procedures, contact the safety coordinator:

Cynthia F. Glenn, cglenn@pittsburghnewchurchschool.org.

3.14 Bicycles, Skateboards, Roller Skates, etc.

Students should not ride bicycles, skateboards, or roller skates or blades on the PNCS campus during school hours. They may be used on campus after 3:00 pm on weekdays and anytime on weekends. They must be left by the shed, and may not be ridden in school buildings. The school is not liable for any items left on school property.

4. COMMUNICATION

"Instruction in civil and moral things is the responsibility of parents and teachers, and is part of a proper education." True Christian Religion 443

See **Section 2.2** for Communication Protocol if you are wondering whom to contact with specific questions or concerns.

4.1 Parents' Rights to School Communication

School communications and student reports will be shared with each of the student's parents unless court orders indicate otherwise.

4.2 Email

Please make sure to carefully read email updates you receive from the school. They include important, timely information, and the *Chalk Talk* is our primary means of communicating information to parents.

4.3 Chalk Talk

Parents are expected to read the school newsletter, the *Chalk Talk*. It contains important school information. It is generally published weekly, will be sent to parents via email, and is available on the PNCS Website.

4.4 PNCS Website and Facebook Page

The school's website can be found at www.pittsburghnewchurchschool.org. Useful information is posted there, such as the school calendar and this handbook. The Pittsburgh New Church School Facebook page also regularly posts upcoming events, as well as pictures of recent events.

4.5 Alert System

PNCS uses the Mojo Text electronic alert system to convey important information to parents such as delayed school openings, cancellations, and emergency closing information (see **Section 3.13**). These messages can be sent in the form of a voice message, a text message, or an email.

4.6 Incoming Calls

Please contact the school secretary at 412-731-0122 to convey routine messages to teachers. Please do not call or text teachers during class hours.

4.7 Use of School and Cell Phones

Faculty and staff may give students permission to use school phones in emergencies. Students may also be given permission to use their own cell phones in emergencies or at other times, determined by the teacher or other school personnel, but students will not otherwise be permitted to use their phones or other devices during the school day.

5. ACADEMICS

[“All instruction is simply the opening of a way.” Arcana Coelestia 1495.2](#)

5.1 Homework

Homework is an occasional yet integral part of the educational experience at PNCS. It serves a variety of uses, including

- Reviewing and practicing classroom material
- Preparing students for the next day’s work
- Encouraging students to use additional resources
- Exploring concepts more fully than there is time for in school
- Learning to work independently
- Encouraging self-discipline and independent study skills, including time management
- Promoting family interactions, such as reading to children
- Serving as a check for teachers as to whether a student understands the material
- Making up work due to an absence
- Completing work started in class

Homework is kept to a minimum at PNCS because students are working hard all day long at school. On a typical night, the average student should spend the following amount of time on homework:

K – 0-5 minutes

1st – 0-10 minutes

2nd – 0-20 minutes

3rd – 0-30 minutes

4th – 0-40 minutes

5th – 0-50 minutes

6th – 0-60 minutes

7th – 0-70 minutes

8th – 0-80 minutes

The total amount of time each individual student spends on homework will vary. The teachers do not assign homework during holiday breaks. Make-up work may be assigned over weekends and holidays in the case of extreme absenteeism.

Parents play a significant role in making homework a positive experience. In the younger grades, parental involvement usually includes helping students learn recitations and reading with them. Parents help children as they progress through school by providing a structured environment to do homework, and by supporting teachers’ expectations with regard to homework completion. Parents are a vital

communication link with the teacher. Parents should contact the teacher when students struggle to complete homework.

5.2 Student Evaluations, Reports, Awards, and Promotion or Retention

Records of students' progress are essential to the education process. Many types of measurements are used to evaluate each student's growth, performance, and potential.

- Standardized tests measure how each child performs in relation to other children of the same age/grade level throughout the country. The standardized tests used are the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). These are administered every spring and results are distributed to parents. Parents can request to have their child opt out of standardized tests.
- Yearly Assessments & Evaluations - Each child is given periodic assessments in subject areas in order to monitor and document progress. Assessments are given at the beginning of the year at the mid-point and again at the end of the year. Results of these assessments are shared with the parents during parent-teacher conferences.
- Report Cards - Reports are sent to parents six times per year, twice per term. There are approximately 12 weeks in each term. These report cards communicate the assessment results in academic achievement and effort in all school subjects, as well as each child's behavioral development, social growth, and study habits. Given the breadth of information that the teachers convey in the report cards, parents should study it carefully to gain an overall view of how the student is doing in school.
- Student Records also known as the student's permanent file, are collected and maintained by the school office. These files include report cards, standardized test results, diagnostic testing, and medical and dental records. Student records can be requested by filling out a formal request form by the parent or another authorized school or educational entity.
- A certificate of award is given to every child at the completion of the school year. These certificates, which are given at the closing ceremonies for PNCS, highlight the many achievements students have made throughout the year.
- Promotion or Retention - If students have completed the requirements for a given grade by the end of the school year, they are promoted to the next grade. When there is a question of a student remaining at the same grade level or advancing a grade (i.e. skipping a grade) parents will be notified. These significant decisions should only take place after in-depth evaluation, consultation, and involvement of all concerned parties.

5.3 Diplomas and Certificates of Attendance

Students who complete eighth grade in a satisfactory manner will receive a diploma. Eighth-grade students who have a failing average for the year in two core subjects, or have missed a significant portion of the school year due to absences will receive a certificate of attendance instead of a diploma.

5.4 School Supplies

Prior to the start of the school year, parents will receive a supply list identifying items that students are expected to bring to school. Textbooks and most school supplies are provided for students.

All electronics will be provided by the school and assigned to a particular student for use throughout the year. An inspection form should be filled out and signed at the beginning and end of the year. Parents, students, and teachers must sign these inspection sheets. Damages to electronic school supplies that are assigned to a particular student are the responsibility of the parents. Parents will be notified of said damages and a bill will be sent to them to cover the damage(s) or cover a replacement whichever is cheaper. This includes student-assigned iPads, computers, reading pens, web cameras, earbuds, headphones, cases, and charging cords.

5.5 Library Information

The Pittsburgh New Church School has individual classroom libraries and a small whole school library with a collection of books available to students and families connected to the school.

Borrowing Materials:

Books and materials can be borrowed by students and should be signed out on a list kept by their classroom teacher. Students are reminded verbally to return borrowed materials to the classroom library. Texts or emails may be sent home to parents if materials are seriously overdue.

Lost or Damaged Books:

When a book is lost or damaged we ask that a donation be made towards its replacement. The following amounts will help us acquire replacements: \$5.00 for paperback easy reader books, \$10.00 for other paperback books, and \$20.00 for hardback books. Thank you for your help in keeping books available for as long as possible.

6. BEHAVIOR

"The Lord is order itself; and therefore, where He is present there is order, and where there is order, He is present." Arcana Coelestia 5703

6.1 Student Behavior

The object of the PNCS behavior system is to create a charitable, safe, orderly, and happy environment for all students and teachers. Rules are based on principles drawn from the Word and on principles of respect for one another and oneself.

The PNCS behavior system supports students' development of empathy and self-regulation by outlining developmentally-appropriate positive behavior expectations and education about what those behaviors look like in different settings. PNCS students are expected to practice courteous manners, speech, and gestures because they are external signs of charity, and students are expected to treat all property with respect. They are supported to learn from their mistakes and to take every opportunity to grow and develop regarding their behavior and its impact on those around them.

Any student whose actions seriously damage the charity, safety, or order of the school environment may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension and expulsion.

6.2 PNCS Code of Conduct

We will respect the Lord, His Name, and His Word.

We will be honest, kind, and helpful.

We will demonstrate respect toward others, ourselves, our school, and our larger community.

6.3 PNCS Color-Coded Behavior System

Our behavior system is based on a color system where each color refers to a particular level of student behavior. The colors in the system are: blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. Each color corresponds to the type of behavior your child exhibits in any one class. Teachers will assign a color to each student during or at the end of class that represents their behavior for that class and will mark it in their assignment book. At the end of the school day, the homeroom teacher will tally all the student's colors from each class and assign a final color for the entire day. Depending on the color assigned, the student will either be rewarded or given a consequence for their behavior.

Blue behavior is going above and beyond what is normally expected behavior, such as helping another student or the teacher, providing comfort or encouragement to a fellow student, seeing what needs to be done, offering to help do it, or doing extra credit academic work. It is a sign of excellence. Blue behavior is rewarded at each teacher's discretion. If a child gets two blues and no yellows or oranges in a single school day, he/she will go home for the entire day on blue!

Green behavior is generally what is expected every day from PNCS students. In general, this is how we expect most kids will behave most of the time. They are to be kind, considerate, and respectful to staff and fellow students alike. In addition, they are expected to come to class, in the dress code, on time, and be prepared to learn. This means they will have all their needed materials with them. They will follow staff instructions respectfully and stay on task without distracting others. Green behavior will be rewarded at each teacher's discretion. We expect most students will complete the school day with mostly greens in their assignment books and therefore will go home on green.

Yellow behavior is a warning that a student is not following the rules and tending down a pathway of behavior that may lead to consequences. It signals a need to stop and think. Yellow behavior includes: coming to class late, unprepared, out of dress code, being disrespectful, talking back or arguing with staff, distracting others, and/or not actively participating in class discussions or activities. Yellow behavior warrants a verbal warning from the staff to the student that their behavior is inappropriate and must stop. A second warning results in the loss of certain student privileges. Any student that accumulates three yellows in one day will receive yellow for the entire day. The parent(s) will be notified by the homeroom teacher in a timely fashion if their child is coming home on yellow. Depending on the severity or repetitive nature of each offense, three yellows in a single day may require a parent/teacher conference or further consequences. Repeated full-day yellow behavior for more than three days in a month will require a parent/teacher conference and the loss of the monthly reward.

Orange behavior is a very strong warning that a student is either not following the rules, being disrespectful, or blatantly defiant. A student exhibiting orange behavior cannot remain in the classroom because they are directly disrupting the learning environment and are on the verge of being sent home. Being separated from the classroom provides the student the chance to reflect upon their actions and change their behavior before they get into more serious trouble. Students exhibiting orange behavior must meet with a teacher during the student recess to discuss their behavior and devise a plan for appropriate actions to improve the situation, which may include a written apology or other assignments to be completed independently. Parent(s) will be notified by the homeroom teacher if a student received an orange at any time during the day. In addition, the student may also be required to complete a short activity directly related to their infraction for a 30-minute detention period after school hours, supervised by the principal or a school staff member. Transportation will not be provided after school hours, and parents will be required to meet with the teacher and principal to discuss the incident if the detention is warranted. Two orange days in a month means the student has lost the privilege of participating in the end-of-month reward. Repeated orange behavior may warrant suspension or expulsion.

Red behavior is not tolerated at PNCS and will result in parents being called since the student must be sent home. Students exhibiting red behavior are a danger to themselves and others and must be removed from the school premises. Verbal threats, emotional manipulation, physical harm, or destruction of school or personal property of any kind will not be tolerated. Red behavior warrants the loss of student privileges, the monthly reward, and the privilege of attending PNCS for the remainder of the day. Parents must meet with the teacher and principal to set up a

plan for this behavior to cease before the student is allowed to return to PNCS. If a student gets three reds during the school year, an automatic suspension for a week will be implemented and recorded in the student's official school records. A fourth red may result in expulsion. Depending on the severity of the infraction, suspension or expulsion may be deemed necessary after only one red behavior infraction.

The Pittsburgh New Church School's behavior system is set up to provide an orderly atmosphere within the entire school at all times. This allows students to learn to the best of their ability in an environment free from fear and distraction. Any student who completes the month with good behavior (fewer than four yellow, two orange, and no red behavior markings) will earn a reward at the end of the month.

6.4 Basic School Rules

- Students will respect the Lord by speaking of Him respectfully, honoring the things of the Word, and not taking His name in vain. While there may be times in a child's life when he/she may hear people referring to God's name as part of an exclamation or to express surprise, this is not acceptable at PNCS. This includes not using the phrase "O My God" (OMG).
- Students will respect every member of the PNCS community, expressing appreciation and recognition for each person's gifts from the Lord.
- Students are taught and expected to use language that is culturally and racially respectful. Students will avoid the use of foul, profane, racist, sexist, or sexually inappropriate language, gestures, or actions. Students will not engage in physical, verbal, or sexual abuse or harassment. Also, students will not create or possess pornographic materials.
- Students are expected to engage in appropriate and respectful behavior regarding public displays of affection. Examples of inappropriate displays of affection include kissing, hugging, and close personal contact.
- Students will engage in upright and honest behavior. Behaviors such as lying, cheating, plagiarism, and forgery will not be tolerated.
- Students will uphold all federal, state, and local laws.
- Students will promote and support the health and safety of others and themselves. The use, possession, or distribution of controlled substances (inhalants, acids, drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, drug paraphernalia, etc.) will not be tolerated. Bringing weapons to school (e.g. knives, slingshots, guns, and fireworks) is also forbidden.
- Students will not steal.
- Students will not vandalize.
- Students will not physically or verbally threaten the physical safety of other students or faculty members.
- Students will not have repeated violations of the rules governing student behavior.

Along with the major rules listed above and each classroom's rules, the following rules also apply to all PNCS students.

- Students may not throw snowballs on campus.
- Students may not climb trees or school structures on campus.

- For rules on electronic usage, see **Section 6.8**.
- For dress code rules, see **Chapter 7**.

6.5 Enforcement of PNCS Rules

An escalating scale of responses is designed to help students learn the natural consequences of inappropriate behavior. The teachers and principal may utilize any one or a combination of the following consequences for rule infractions:

- Personal conference with student
- Personal or phone conference with parents
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Detention
- Suspension
- Probationary period
- Dismissal from school
- Other appropriate responses

The school retains flexibility in dealing with students who have committed rule infractions. Civil authorities may be involved if appropriate. While most misbehavior is dealt with in a gradual response manner, serious offenses may lead to immediate, significant disciplinary responses. Parents will be notified of major rule infractions and consequences.

Minor Behavior Infractions

Minor infractions such as breaking classroom rules and dress code violations will be addressed by the classroom teacher. Faculty members will notify the principal of a student who continues to engage in repeated minor behavior infractions since repeated minor infractions become a major school infraction. Efforts will be made by classroom teachers, and the principal to engage students in problem-solving so that they can experience growth and learn with regard to their behavior and its impact on others. Students are invited to engage in this collaborative activity, self-reflect, and participate in making amends where appropriate when they have caused harm to another.

Detention

Students may be assigned detention for repeated behavioral infractions such as receiving a number of behavior warnings, dress code warnings, or disrespecting teachers or other students.

- Students will be informed that they have detention, and an automated email will also go home to parents that day informing them that their child will have detention the following school day.
- Students who have earned detention will complete a writing assignment. The assignment will direct the student to reflect on his/her actions and what restorative practices might be appropriate. The student will need to complete the assignment and submit it by the next day.
- If the student did not complete the assignment fully enough they may be asked to redo it.

- A PNCS staff member will supervise detention in a designated location every day of the school week.
- Detentions will be served the day after they are received, and most likely the only way parents will be notified is via email. Parents should check email every evening to see if their child has detention the following day (detentions will be served on Monday if they are earned on Friday).
- Detention will begin five minutes after the school day ends at 3:00 and will last thirty minutes. Parents should make arrangements to pick children up at the school's office entrance at the end of detention.
- Students who are five or more minutes late for detention will serve an additional ten minutes of detention that day. If they are more than 15 minutes late, they will be assigned a detention for the following day, in addition to the completion of the remainder of their original detention.
- In the event that a student does not show up for detention on the day it is to be served, he or she will serve detention the following day and detention the day after that. This is considered a second infraction.
- If a student misbehaves during detention, he or she will be assigned additional detention for the following day.
- Parents should contact the principal in the case of extenuating circumstances which prohibit students from serving detention on a particular day.

Suspension/Separation

In some instances, the nature of the violation might indicate that temporary separation or suspension from the classroom or school is warranted. The length of the suspension or separation may vary. For suspension, the principal will communicate with the parents, and the student will be expected to spend the following day in the principal's office, isolated in order to support the child in making positive behavior choices.

Withdrawal from School

A student may be asked by the principal to withdraw from school, or a student not subject to disciplinary action may withdraw from school upon written notification to the principal by a parent/guardian. Any claims or settlements arising from a withdrawal or dismissal are subject to the terms of the enrollment agreement between the school and parents/guardians.

Dismissal

In some instances, the nature of the violation might indicate a student being dismissed from the school. Students who have been dismissed or withdrawn for disciplinary purposes may not return to campus or take part in school-sponsored events unless their parents secure advance written permission from the principal.

Readmission Policy

Students who have been dismissed from school or who have withdrawn for disciplinary purposes cannot reapply. This does not include medical leave.

Behavior Outside of School

Students' behavior on the way to and from school can fall under the jurisdiction of the school's discipline system. This includes behavior on the school buses and walking to and from school. It is expected that students will also refrain from any action outside the school environment that might bring discredit, embarrassment, or harm to members of the PNCS community. A PNCS student represents the school in his/her words and deeds, even when off campus. Students whose off-campus behaviors are prejudicial, harmful, or potentially dangerous to students or the school community may be subject to the school's disciplinary policies (behaviors include damage to school grounds or property, bullying of other students that affects school participation, inappropriate social media posting, or online declarations that discredit the school or its personnel.)

6.6 Care for School Property

Students are involved in the cleaning of classrooms and the school to foster an orderly sphere. Students demonstrating disrespect for school facilities will face disciplinary action. Some specific guidelines:

- Students are to treat textbooks and all school materials with respect.
- Students should treat others' belongings with care.
- Students should not touch any teachers' desks, closets, or materials.
- Students or their parents will replace or pay for damaged school property.

6.7 Bullying

Bullying is an act that is done on purpose. Students who bully use their perceived power (physical size, age, popularity, etc.) to threaten, annoy persistently or harm others. Most often, bullying happens over and over to one person or a group of people, but not always. The difference between rude or mean behavior and bullying behavior lies in repetition, duration, and malicious intent. The following are examples of bullying.

Bullying	Description
Verbal Bullying (including Cyber-Bullying)	Taunting, teasing, name-calling; using words to humiliate, intimidate, ridicule, or hurt feelings; spreading rumors, whispering about another student; refusing to let someone else speak. Racial epithets and discriminatory statements are considered bullying and unacceptable.
Non-verbal and Non-physical Bullying	Making threatening gestures; making obscene gestures; making gestures that indicate contempt or other negative attitudes; excluding others from a group; manipulating others' friendships.
Physical Bullying	Hitting; kicking; punching; shoving; assault; destruction or theft of property; encouraging another to do any of the above.

Sexual Harassment	Sexual harassment is another form of bullying which demeans, embarrasses, or humiliates another person. This includes jokes, comments, or taunts about sexual body parts, and passing notes or pictures of sexual content.
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To combat bullying behavior, PNCS takes a multifaceted approach, including education for the students about what is considered bullying behaviors, extensive supervision, significant consequences, and help for those who are targeted.

The prevention program focuses on regular education in, and practice of, positive behaviors, as well as discussion of what to do when you or someone else is bullied. Teachers also host regular discussions on charitable interactions and bullying interactions. Our aim is to keep students safe and also to facilitate the social and emotional learning of all students at PNCS.

When a teacher identifies bullying behavior, students are given the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. They meet with a teacher to help develop empathy, and they may be issued a bully warning. Parents are notified and expectations are outlined for future positive behavior and consequences for further bullying behavior. Such consequences range from a discussion about the serious nature of bullying to restorative action to detention or suspension, and can ultimately lead to dismissal from school as described in [Section 6.5](#). The school tracks these patterns of behavior. Support is provided for the student who has been on the receiving end of bullying behavior, and for the student who has exhibited bullying behavior.

6.8 Electronic Usage

Electronic devices such as cellphones, air pods, smartwatches, and all devices that have internet connectivity can disrupt classes and be used for cheating or inappropriate audio and visual recording. While onsite, PNCS observes the following electronic usage rules:

- All devices should be turned off and not be used during the instructional day (8:15-3:00) or during any school-sponsored event, such as after-school activities.
- Students may use electronic devices only after 3:00, once dismissed and out of the building.
- Electronic devices should be kept in students' backpacks during the instructional day (never in students' pockets). They should be out of sight and be turned off or on a silent ring at all times during the instructional day.

Consequences

1st offense: The device is confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.

2nd offense: The device is confiscated and returned to the student's parent or guardian at the end of the school day.

3rd offense: The device is confiscated and returned to the student's parent or guardian at the end of the school day. Disciplinary consequences may be applied.

Under exceptional circumstances, and only with prior teacher permission, students may use school-issued electronic devices as aids for reading and note-taking purposes only. With prior permission from their teacher, students may carry phones and take photographs during field trips and special events, but no pictures may be taken during the normal school day.

7. DRESS CODE

“ as man orders the externals so the Lord orders the internals; ”
Divine Providence 181

7.1 Introduction

The Pittsburgh New Church School dress code is intended to promote a sphere of external order, modesty, and conscientiousness about school. We appreciate the participation of parents in outfitting their children following these guidelines. If there is a medical reason why a student cannot comply with the dress code for an ongoing need, a doctor's note and a conversation with the principal are required.

If a student comes to school out of dress code, they will be given dress code-approved clothing from the exchange rack if available, or parents will be required to bring a change of clothes for their child. Repeated infractions may warrant a parent conference with the school or other consequences.

7.2 General Clothing Requirements

While in school, students should wear classic, solid color only, uniform-style clothing. This includes long or short pants for both sexes, skirts and jumpers for girls, long or short sleeve button-up collared polo shirts, and simple, secure-fitting shoes or sandals.

The following guidelines apply to all clothing items. If an item is not listed in this dress code, it is not permitted.

Clothing should fit well. It should not be too tight, too short, too long, too low, form-fitting, or baggy.

Clothing should be simple. It should be in solid colors, with no stripes or patterns, decorations, embellishments, words, or logos. (A small alligator or polo player type logo is acceptable.)

Clothing should be in good condition. It should be clean without unfinished seams or edges, tears, fraying, stains, or wrinkles.

PNCS logo wear is always permissible. PNCS long and short sleeve polo shirts and PNCS crewneck sweatshirts are available. Contact the school office at (412) 731-0122 to purchase.

Pants and Shorts

Acceptable pants and shorts are traditional, uniform-style pants or shorts in any solid color (this style of pants is sometimes referred to as chinos, Dockers, or khakis). Pants and shorts should sit at or just below the waist and have a straight leg. Shorts should be no more than 4" from the ground when kneeling.

- No jeans, cargo pants, military fatigues, overalls, sweatpants, warm-up pants, or athletic wear. (Athletic wear is permitted for PE class only.)
- No bellbottoms, gauchos, low-rise pants, or baggy pockets.
- No satin or denim material.

Skirts and Jumpers/Dresses

In addition to pants and shorts, girls may wear skirts, skorts, and jumpers/dresses. Acceptable skirts, skorts (skirt with attached shorts), and jumpers/dresses are traditional, uniform-style in any solid color. They should sit at or just below the waist and be no more than 4" from the floor when kneeling. Uniform style buttons are permitted. For modesty's sake, solid-color, fitted knit shorts, or spandex must be worn underneath skirts and jumpers/dresses and must come down to mid-thigh.

Shirts

Acceptable shirts are traditional, uniform-style long or short sleeve polo shirts, button-up collared shirts, and full turtlenecks (no mock turtlenecks) worn under a polo shirt, in woven, jersey, or mesh (pique) fabric with buttons all the way up to the collar. Any solid color is permitted with the exception of metallic or neon colors. Shirts should be long enough to cover the waistband when the arms are raised but should not go below the hips.

Sweaters/Fleeces/Sweatshirts

Acceptable sweaters and fleeces are traditional, uniform-style in solid colors. Sweaters and fleeces can be a cardigan or pull-over styles with zippers or buttons. Sweater and fleece vests are permitted. Students are allowed to wear the PNCS sweatshirt but are not permitted to wear hoodie-style sweatshirts or coats in the classroom. If your child tends to get cold at school, you will need to send him/her with a regulation sweater, fleece, or PNCS crew neck sweatshirt. No hoodies are allowed in the classrooms. Students are required to wear a dress code compliant (collared) shirt underneath all sweaters, fleeces, and sweatshirts.

Hats and Head Coverings

No head coverings may be worn. This includes ballcaps, hats, scarves, doo rags, or any kind of head cover. The exception is winter hats while outside in cold weather.

Shoes and Sandals

Students may wear any shoes, as long as they are safe and secure-fitting. Note that footwear such as flip-flops, soft-soled slippers, and Crocs do not meet these requirements. Shoes should always be neatly fastened (tied, buckled, velcroed), and worn with socks. Sandals should have a strap across the foot and around the back of the ankle.

- No water shoes, jelly shoes, Vibram FiveFingers, or look-alikes of these styles.
- No heels or pumps over 1" high.
- No excessive padding or distracting styling.
- See **Section 7.4** Clothing Guidelines for P.E. below for important information about P.E. shoes.

7.3 Outdoor wear

On bad weather days, students are encouraged to wear boots and snow clothes or raincoats to school but must change to acceptable shoes before the school bell

rings at 8:30 am. Boots must be neatly stored under the student's hook, with all outerwear hung on the hook.

The outdoors is used as part of the school day, even in inclement weather. As a result, students will be expected to have outerwear that will enable them to be outside in rain and cold weather. They may bring outerwear to leave at school so they don't have to remember it every day.

7.4 Clothing Guidelines for P.E.

Kindergarten and First Grades (K - 1)

Kindergarten and first grade students wear their school clothes to P.E. Wear secure fitting, comfortable shoes with non-marking soles to school and to P.E. class, or bring sneakers/athletic shoes to change into for P.E. class.

All Other grades (2-8)

All other grade students will be issued a P.E. t-shirt by the P.E. teacher in their first class. The t-shirt stays at school and will be laundered regularly. Students must wear socks and secure-fitting sneakers/athletic shoes with non-marking soles and laced-up ties to P.E. class. Hair must be tied back for P.E. classes. Students are encouraged to leave their sneakers at their coat hook, have personal care items such as deodorant and a comb/brush (aerosol not allowed), and have a dress code-approved sweatshirt or cold weather coat for outside activities.

7.5 Jewelry

- All jewelry should be minimal and not distracting.
- Visible body piercings, other than ear piercing and nostril piercing, are not acceptable. Nostril piercings must be limited to small studs. All earrings and nostril studs must be removed for P.E.
- Sunglasses are not to be worn inside the school building.

7.6 Hair

- Hair should be neat, clean, nicely groomed, and kept out of the eyes. Distracting variations of hairstyle, or hair that calls undue attention to a student, is not acceptable. Students with hair that falls into their eyes, and who do not want to cut it, may discreetly use hair products such as rubber bands, clips, or hairspray to keep their hair out of their eyes.
- Hair must be tied back for P.E. classes.
- Boys should have a clean-shaven appearance (no mustaches or beards).

8. STUDENT SERVICES

“Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

8.1 General Information

Classroom teachers provide instruction for a wide range of student abilities. However, some students may benefit from additional support. This support is provided through the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU) and our Multisensory Institute (MSI).

Allegheny County Intermediate Unit (AIU)

The Allegheny County Intermediate Unit (AIU) is a state-funded regional educational service agency, part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To serve the non-public schools, the Intermediate Unit administers a program of auxiliary services for the students attending non-profit, non-public schools. The AIU currently offers support at PNCS in the following areas: speech therapy and educational testing. These services are allocated on a year-by-year basis at the discretion of the county.

The AIU speech-language pathologist offers speech therapy for students who qualify for this service based on AIU qualification parameters and as AIU resources allow. This service is offered during the school day on PNCS premises, as the speech-language pathologist's schedule allows.

The AIU also provides educational testing for students who qualify for this service based on AIU qualification guidelines, and as AIU resources allow. Student testing is performed by an AIU School Psychologist on PNCS premises.

Multi-Sensory Institute (MSI)

The Multi-Sensory Institute (MSI) provides academic support, and remedial services, as resources allow. Access to these services is coordinated through the homeroom teacher. If the teacher or parents suspect these services might be useful, the teacher will contact the MSI director/PNCS principal, who will determine if services should be provided and the level of support needed.

Additional Reading tutoring

The PNCS in collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of Pennsylvania (LDA of PA) provides free or low-cost one-on-one tutoring in reading. To sign your child up for this additional tutoring service that happens during or after the school day, the teacher and/or parent must contact the PNCS principal to arrange these services. There may be a waiting list for these services.

8.2 School Counselor

At this time, PNCS does not have a dedicated school counselor. Our classroom teachers provide support to the best of their ability to students who struggle with managing the normal developmental tasks of childhood. In addition, we try to assist students with a variety of issues including bullying, emotional conflicts,

friendship, and family concerns, time management, conflict resolution, and stress and anxiety reduction. Some students may need to be referred for outside counseling. In the event that an individual presents a danger to self or others or is at risk for harm, private information will be judiciously shared, and then only in the interest of protection and safety. Parents are always consulted in crisis situations and are encouraged to call on a professional counselor for support and guidance anytime concerns or challenges arise.

PNCS is not equipped to handle or support students with severe social-emotional or behavioral issues. These are defined as those issues that disrupt the learning environment for that child and others. In these cases, a child may be asked to withdraw from PNCS.

8.3 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Treatment Education (SAPTE)

The Sexual Abuse Prevention and Treatment Education program is designed to give children the tools to recognize inappropriate sexual contact and to enable them to report to responsible adults. Each grade level is presented with a lesson during the school year as part of the curriculum.

Our expectation is that all students be taught the valuable material covered in the SAPTE lessons. Parents will be notified before these lessons are taught and some parents may choose to have their child learn the material at home rather than in the classroom. If this is the case, parents will indicate their wish to make these arrangements with the classroom teacher or principal.

8.4 Reporting Child Abuse

Child abuse is a very serious offense that threatens the innocence of children. Physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse all leave long-lasting scars and give the child additional opportunity to damage a growing child. The protection of children is a primary responsibility of PNCS. We follow the General Church Child Protection Policy – Guarding Against Abuse. The General Church Abuse Committee may be informed of allegations involving church members or students.

School personnel are legally bound by the state of Pennsylvania to report any suspected abuse. All Pittsburgh New Church employees are legally mandated reporters and must report whenever there exists reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected. Teachers and administrators may not investigate any case. Civil authorities will decide whether to investigate and conduct an investigation.

9. HEALTH

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore we will not fear." Psalm 46:1-2

9.1 Health Care

PNCS does not have a full-time nurse. PNCS maintains a relationship with Pittsburgh Public Schools to provide a school nurse to conduct routine screenings and records checks.

9.2 Medical Forms

Yearly updated medical forms (including physicals and dental exams as required by the state) must be returned to the school before students are allowed to register, attend classes, or participate in other school events.

The school office keeps all medical history and medical records confidential, except as may otherwise be required by applicable law or regulations. When appropriate, parents and students may elect to share pertinent medical information with a teacher or administrator. Medical records are prohibited from being released unless specific written permission is given.

Parents are encouraged to inform the school promptly of any new or changed medical treatment at home during the academic year, particularly if such treatment includes prescription medications. Parents are also encouraged to communicate student illness and injuries to the school.

9.3 Immunizations

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires that no student be admitted to school without having complied with the Immunization Regulations 28 Pa. Code 23.81-87. This requires immunization for the following illnesses.

Children in all grades (K-8) need the following immunizations for attendance:

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday) – DTaP,
- 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday),
- 2 doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR),
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B,
- 2 doses of varicella (chicken pox) or evidence of immunity,
- Prior to 7th Grade: 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap) 1 dose of Meningococcal conjugate.

The Pennsylvania Health Department eliminated the eight-month provisional status for admittance to school effective the 2017-2018 school year and set up requirements that would allow for the exclusion of students under certain circumstances. The amendments require a child to have any single dose vaccine upon school entry or risk exclusion. In the case of a multi-dose vaccine, the

amendments require that the child have at least one dose upon school entry. If additional doses are required a Medical Certificate Form (available from the school secretary or school nurse) must be filled out and signed by the medical provider as proof that the student is scheduled to complete the required immunization plan. As per Health Department requirements, this certificate will be reviewed every 30 days and kept on file at the school until the official school immunization record is complete.

If there are conscientious objections (Pa. Code 23.84), an exemption certificate setting forth the reason for objection is to be kept as an official part of the student's health record. Acceptable objections include: medical reasons (requiring a doctor's signature); religious beliefs; and a philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction. Objection certificates may be obtained from the school secretary.

In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, a non-vaccinated child may be excluded from school until the outbreak is over.

9.4 Communicable Diseases

The school requests that parents keep at home any child who has been exposed to a serious communicable disease for the days when children usually come down with the disease. A check every morning during the incubation period should help against spreading the disease. In case of doubt with any symptoms of illness, call your doctor.

A child should be kept home from school if any one of the following symptoms appears either during the night or in the morning. These symptoms can be precursors to many different illnesses. A day of rest will help your child recover more quickly and prevent the spread of illness to other children. These guidelines help provide a safe and healthy environment for our children.

- Mouth sores associated with an inability to control saliva
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes
- Purulent discharge from the eyes
- Productive cough with fever
- Oral temperature equal to or greater than 100.6 F (students must be fever free for twenty-four hours without fever-reducing medication, prior to returning to school)
- Unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of severe illness
- Vomiting (until resolved)
- Diarrhea (until resolved)
- Symptoms of flu: body aches/pains, headache, lethargy, fever etc.

In accordance with Pennsylvania State Regulations, certain contagious diseases require children to be kept home from school. Your cooperation will help maintain a healthy environment for our children.

CHILDREN MUST REMAIN HOME FROM SCHOOL WITH THE FOLLOWING DISEASES, as indicated:

Disease	Quarantine
CHICKEN POX	Until the last blister has scabbed over.
CONJUNCTIVITIS (PURULENT)	After twenty-four hours on antibiotic therapy and drainage subsides.
GERMAN MEASLES (RUBELLA)	At least four days after the appearance of rash and symptoms have subsided.
HEPATITIS A	At least seven days after onset of illness/jaundice (note from doctor required).
IMPETIGO	Twenty-four hours on antibiotic therapy and/or note from a doctor.
LICE (HEAD)	From first identification until after first treatment with a pediculicide and nit free (consult your doctor).
MEASLES	At least four days from onset of rash (further exclusion may be required by the Health Department).
MUMPS	At least nine days after onset of symptoms or until parotid swelling goes down.
PERTUSSIS	Five days on pertussis-specific antibiotic therapy or twenty-one days with no antibiotic.
RINGWORM	Until effective antifungal treatment has commenced and/or note from doctor.
SCABIES	Until effective scabicial treatment has commenced and/or note from doctor.
SCARLET FEVER	At least twenty-four hours on antibiotic therapy and no fever.
STREP THROAT	At least twenty-four hours on antibiotic therapy and no fever.
TONSILLITIS	At least twenty-four hours on antibiotic therapy and no fever.

As of May, 2023 the Covid state of emergency has been lifted. While this illness is still very much on everybody's mind, PNCS no longer has an individual plan of action specifically for this disease. Please see the guidelines above for symptoms of illness and keep your child home if you suspect Covid-19, flu or other contagious respiratory illness. Testing and wearing masks while in school, while not required, is a courtesy to others and welcome when Covid-19 is suspected.

Pittsburgh New Church School looks to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD), the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) when responding to the presence of disease within the school community especially as it may relate to pandemics. A response to such situations may require testing for the presence of disease, required use of masks, a partial or full closure of the school or other appropriate responses. In such cases, PNCS holds the safety of students, teachers, employees, and community members as its highest priority.

If an individual is symptomatic as described above, he or she should be tested for COVID-19. If the test result is negative, the individual may return to school after 24 hours without fever, off fever-reducing medication, and with improved respiratory symptoms.

9.5 Symptoms of Illness at School

School staff is available to care for students with mild symptoms of illness such as headaches. Parents will be called to pick up any student with vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or other signs that an illness is progressing.

9.6 Chronic Health Conditions

The school will facilitate care for students with chronic health conditions such as type 1 diabetes, asthma, life-threatening allergies, and seizure disorders. Parents of students who require medication administration on a daily or as-needed basis must provide a doctor's order for the medication, medication in the original labeled container from the pharmacy, any necessary supplies, and an emergency action plan completed by the physician. The school will work with the parents to create an individual health plan to meet the student's needs while in the classroom and participating in activities during the school day.

9.7 Injuries/Illness Requiring Exclusion from P.E.

We recognize that there are times when acute illness or injury prevents a student from participating in PE classes. We ask that the parent send in a note that states the reason their child needs to be excused from PE. If a student is going to miss more than one week of PE, they must bring a doctor's note to school with the diagnosis, restrictions, and duration of exclusion/anticipated return date to PE class.

When a student fractures a bone, we request a doctor's note including any restrictions and anticipated return date to PE class. Students will require a note from the doctor stating they are cleared to resume PE class before participating.

When a student is diagnosed with a concussion a doctor's note must be submitted to the school either clearing the student to participate in PE or outlining any physical restrictions, academic modifications, or other accommodations. The note should include the length of time these restrictions should be in place. An update should be provided by the doctor and submitted to the school following each visit until the student is cleared to return to all activities.

A doctor's or parent's note for exclusion from PE class will be extended to physical activities (i.e. soccer, football, etc.) during snack recess, lunch recess, and after-school activities.

9.8 Medications

The standing order form allows parents to choose from a list of commonly used over-the-counter medications to be given on an as-needed basis during school hours. We will contact parents for consent for each instance of an as-needed medication administration.

During school hours, if a student needs to take a prescription or an over-the-counter medication that is not on the standing order form, we will follow this procedure:

All medications must be brought to school in their original container. Prescription medications must be brought in their original container with the prescription label

attached. Parents must fill out and sign a medication administration request form for each medication to be given at school. All medication is to be kept in a locked drawer and administered by an authorized staff member.

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will be created for all students with chronic health conditions that may require emergency care while at school (asthma, type 1 diabetes, seizure disorders, life-threatening allergies, etc.). The EAP will include emergency contact information, typical symptoms of distress, and a treatment plan as provided by the student's doctor. An Individual Health Plan (IHP) will be created for all students with chronic health conditions that require daily monitoring and care.

9.9 Medical Leave Policy

Treatment for certain medical and psychological conditions and behaviors is best handled outside the school setting. Severe depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse, and pregnancy are examples of such conditions that may require more treatment, support, supervision, and guidance than the school can provide. In some situations, these conditions and behaviors may also create undue disruption in the classroom. Should such a situation arise, the school reserves the right to require a medical leave of absence or a medical separation. The school may authorize a voluntary or mandated medical leave of absence. These same officials will determine whether, and under what conditions, the student should return to school.

There are generally three forms of medical leaves:

Short-Term: An approved absence from the school for health reasons lasting no more than two weeks. Once a medical leave decision is made as outlined above, the principal will inform the student's teachers. The principal will coordinate communication between the teacher and the student's parents during the period of medical leave to assure adequate maintenance of course work. The responsibility for keeping up with the course work lies with the student's family.

Long Term: An approved absence from the school for health reasons lasting longer than two weeks, but no more than one academic year. This may require the rest of the current term plus an additional term to stabilize the student's condition. The principal will communicate with the classroom teacher to determine the academic consequences of such leave and will share this information with the student's parents.

Medical Separation: A voluntary or mandated absence from the school for health reasons requiring more than one academic year. This leave is reserved for the student who has demonstrated efforts to adjust, but for health reasons cannot meet the requirements of the school community, academically or socially.

9.10 Returning from a Medical Leave or Separation

Prior to a student's return to school, the parents, homeroom teacher, and principal will determine the exact timing of that return. The student's parents must provide the school with information and access to the treating professionals, as well as reports of social and academic function in the alternate school. The principal will communicate the decision regarding the return to the student's parents, and will determine the appropriate academic program.

10. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

[“Praise the Lord!...Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the lute and harp!...Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Psalm 150:1, 3, 6](#)

10.1 Additional Activities

PNCS offers other activities, including music lessons, reading tutoring, and after-care. These programs are optional and parents may choose to enroll their child in them for a fee.

10.2 Music Lessons

Lessons for cello, piano, guitar, and drums are offered to PNCS students after the school day. Lessons are taught by outside providers and are subject to their fees and schedules. Registration forms are available from the school office.

10.3 After School Care

PNCS offers after-school care for students in grades K-8. The program runs from 3:00-4:30 pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and costs \$20 a day per student. The program provides students with time to work on homework, do enrichment projects and be active. Individuals enrolled in the after-care need to adhere to PNCS school rules and policies for behavior and discipline. For more information about after-school care call the school office.

11. MISCELLANEOUS

[“All people must prepare the way for God...For people have free will in acquiring knowledge for themselves, and as they acquire knowledge from the Word by means of their understanding, they prepare the way by which God may descend and raise them up.” True Christian Religion 24:1-2](#)

11.1 Visual Images of Students

Students at PNCS may have their photographs and/or video or digital images taken for internal purposes. Examples of these uses are internal publicity of school activities, hallway displays, instructional evaluations, internally viewed slideshows, etc. Images may have names posted with them. Permission is not solicited for these purposes. However, the school does solicit permission each year from parents to use the images of their children for external uses such as the *Chalk Talk*, the school website, the school Facebook page, and similar publications.

11.2 Students’ and Parents’ Rights Regarding Animal Use in Education

State law mandates a non-animal option to all Pennsylvania students in grades K-12 who object to participation in dissection, vivisection, incubation, capturing, or otherwise harming or destroying animals or any parts thereof in science classes.

Parents and/or students have a right to decline to participate in instructional activities involving such use of animals. Alternative activities will be provided without penalty to those who exercise this right and who provide a written request to that effect.

11.3 Personal Property

PNCS assumes no responsibility in any circumstances whatsoever for the loss, destruction, or theft of any personal student property that is brought to school at any time, or to any after-school activity.

11.4 Sharing Food with Classmates

Due to a number of students with special food instructions, including allergies and other serious health concerns, PNCS asks parents to first coordinate with the classroom teacher before bringing in food to share with classmates. This includes birthday and holiday celebrations. Teachers may choose to initiate and manage a classroom event in which food is brought in by parents or students. When a variety of food choices is offered, the options are outlined by the teacher (who knows the dietary restrictions of the students in the class). Because occurrences are limited, we feel that such occasions can be safely managed by the classroom teachers.

11.5 Internet

Internet usage at PNCS is closely monitored to promote its positive uses and to guard against abuses. Parents and students in grades 4-8 accept a contract outlining, acknowledging, and agreeing to abide by the usage rules. Our network also has filtering software to help prevent students from accidentally encountering offensive sites.

11.6 Party Invitation Guidelines

Party invitations should not be handed out (or given verbally) at school unless everyone in the student's particular classroom is being invited. Please do not take groups of children to parties directly from the classroom unless everyone is invited, as this can be hurtful to those who are excluded.

11.7 Visitors

Visitors are welcome. Those wishing to visit the school as a whole or a specific class must consult with the school office to confirm a time for the visit beforehand. All visitors must sign in at the school office before preceding through the building. A visitor's pass must be worn during your visit.